



John Clark/The Gazette

South Point's Troy Leeper breaks away from a pair of Lincolnton defenders during their game Friday night. Leeper ran for 283 yards on 40 carries and had 2 TDs.

Keep away

Red Raiders get revenge on Wolves

By Phillip Gardner
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LINCOLNTON — Ahead one touchdown with 6 1/2 minutes remaining, South Point needed to do one thing: run the clock.

That was rarely a problem on this night. South Point played keep away most of the first half and put together one final

clock-consuming drive to close out a hard-fought 35-21 win at Lincolnton on Friday.

Troy Leeper rushed for 283 yards and two TDs and provided the backbreaking 40-yard run with 90 seconds remaining to set up the final touchdown and help South Point (2-0) turn back a Lincolnton rally.

"We realized they were coming the second half,

but we just turned it up," said Leeper, who ran for 253 yards and two TDs in the matchup last year.

A series that saw back-to-back overtime games the past two years produced another closely contested matchup that went to the wire.

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Lincolnton (1-1) punted with 6:20 remaining, pinning South Point on its own 25. But the Red Raiders went the distance, running 10 plays and scoring on quarterback Patrick Home's 6-yard keeper with 35 seconds remaining.

"I wouldn't want to let them have the ball on the 10-yard line as many weapons as they have in that close a game," South Point coach Mickey Lineberger said. "They're so dang explosive and have so many weapons, they can score even with three seconds or 10 seconds or whatever."

South Point ran 69 plays to Lincolnton's 33, and all but three of South Point's plays were on the ground. Home rushed for 48 yards on 18 carries and scored three times. Devan Robbins added 33 yards on four carries and Tyler Bray carried four times for 29 yards.

Center Jordan Kagen, tackles Jeffrey Lawing and David Braunscheidel and guards Taylor Ginn and Jon Robert Stewart blocked for 399 yards of offense, including 393 on the ground.

Much of South Point's keep away tactics were at work in the first half. When the Red Raiders took a 14-0 lead at the 6:27 mark of the second quarter, they had run 34 plays to Lincolnton's four. The reason? The Wolves fumbled on the game's opening play, went three and out on their next series and weren't anywhere near the ball when South Point recovered an onside kick after its first touchdown.

The Wolves finally got in gear after Leeper's first touchdown made it 14-0. Patrick Rendleman found Jonathan Gidney wide open behind the secondary for a 54-yard TD pass.



John Clary/The Gazette

South Point's Devan Robbins runs upfield after taking a handoff from Patrick Home during their game against Lincolnton Friday night.

Inside the game

Tiring on offense: It was still the second quarter when some of South Point's offensive players began to tire because the Red Raiders had run 34 plays to Lincolnton's four.

"It was probably the worst night before halftime," senior center Jordan Kagen said. "Then adrenaline kicked in in the fourth quarter."

Turnover free: South Point played its second consecutive game without a turnover.

Keep it on the ground: Lincolnton and South Point each completed only one pass.

Leeper scored five plays later for a 21-7 South Point margin, but Lincolnton answered with an 8-play, 51-yard drive capped by Michael Cunningham's 16-yard TD run on fourth-and-two to close the gap to 21-14 just before the half.

"I thought it was a very physical game. I thought our kids showed a lot of grit and determination," Lincolnton coach Scott Cloninger said. "I thought they played well in the second and third quarters."

Lincolnton forced South

Point to punt on its first two possessions of the second half, and the Wolves tied the score at 21 on Jaden Angle's 6-yard run in the third quarter. South Point then scored twice in the fourth quarter to close it out.

Dee Littlejohn, Lincolnton's bruising fullback, didn't get his second carry until 3 1/2 minutes before halftime but his fresh legs started getting to work on his way to 77 yards.

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South Point 0 21 0 14 — 35
Lincolnton 0 14 7 0 — 21

Second quarter

SP—Patrick Home 6 run (Dayton Rogers kick), 11:09.

SP—Troy Leeper 2 run (Rogers kick), 6:27.

L—Jonathan Gidney 54 pass from Patrick Rendleman (Braden Willis kick), 5:40.

SP—Leeper 2 run (Rogers kick), 3:43.
L—Michael Cunningham 16 run (Willis kick), 1:09.

Third quarter

L—Jaden Angle 6 run (Willis kick), 4:15.

Fourth quarter

SP—Home 1 run (Rogers kick), 9:10.

SP—Home 6 run (Rogers kick), 0:35.